AN ADDRESS TO THE SUBSCRIBERS FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE MISSIONS CARRIED ON BY Voluntary Contributions FOR THE BENEFIT of the NEGROES IN THE Britiſh Iſlands, in the Weſt-Indies.

By THOMAS COKE, L. L. D.

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To the Subſcribers, &c.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

ACCORDING to my duty as in ſome meaſure a weak inſtrument in theſe miſſions under the direction of Almighty Grace, and in juſtice to you, I take the liberty of laying before you an account of the work of God among the negroes in our Societies in the *Weſt-Indies*. And as no perſons are ſo well qualified to give you ſatisfaction as thoſe who reſide in the Iſlands, I have laid before you ſuch extracts of letters as will, I truſt, enable you to form ſome judgment of the preſent ſtate and future proſpects of the whole work.

1. [From Mr. *Bull*, * dated *Kingſton, Jamaica*, May 15, 1790.]

BEFORE I begin to explain myſelf, let us give God thanks for his boundleſs mercy, and particularly for influencing the hearts of ſo many of his people in your happy Iſle, my dear countrymen and brethren in Chriſt, to be inſtruments in his hand in carrying on this bleſſed work. Doubly bleſſed are ye, (and may you be ſo in your ſtores,) for ſupporting the miniſters of God in ſo praiſe-worthy an undertaking—to viſit the dark and wicked regions of ſin and iniquity, as the means of bringing thouſands of poor ſouls from the power of Satan, to enjoy the glorious light,

* Mr. *Bull* is a carpenter who reſides in *Kingſton*, and is alſo an attorney for ſeveral eſtates in the Iſland.

knowledge and power of the goſpel. Mine and one hundred and fifty of my brethren's thanks be as an oblation, though ſmall, yet offered up from grateful hearts to Almighty God through Chriſt. May he abundantly bleſs you all with his fulneſs in Chriſt to your everlaſting comfort!

As I have much to ſay, I muſt beg your patience, knowing you will cover all the errors with the mantle of love. You have our prayers already for ſending our dear brother *Hammet* among us, who is carrying on the cauſe of Chriſt with great zeal, and is alſo bleſſed with great ſucceſs, conſidering the wicked prejudices of this place formed of long date againſt all goodneſs. Yet, notwithſtanding, numbers are brought to God, and coming in daily, ſo that a large field is opening here for the ſpreading of the goſpel. God is with us, therefore we doubt not of his bleſſing. In ſhort, we have put our very enemies to the bluſh, who marvel at our extenſive work, and confeſs that God is with us."

2. [From Mr. *Hammet*, dated *Kingſton, Jamaica*, Jan. 20, 1790.]

IF we are to underſtand by converſion, the knowledge of ſalvation by the remiſſion of ſins, I am perſuaded by my own perſonal knowledge of many of the Negroes in the Iſland of *Antigua*, that they are burning and ſhining lights, and ſuch as perhaps cannot be exceeded in any Society in *Europe* for the fruits of piety in their lives. Not only ſo, but ſeveral of them are able, from experience, to communicate the ſaving truths of the goſpel to their fellow-creatures. Our brethren *Warrener* and *Harper* who have been ſtationed there, can authentically inform you, I have no doubt, of hundreds who know the pardoning love of God.

In St. *Kitt's* when I left it, there were not leſs than 80, and not more than 100, who met in the Band-Society in *Baſſe-Terre* (beſides other believers in

in the country) who could give you time and place, when and where God pardoned their ſins. If I was there, I could ſend you the experience of ſome of them, which would bear a publication.

Since I left St. *Kitt's*, I ſpent ſeven months at *Tortola*, where ſome hundreds were under conviction for ſin; and I can truly ſay, from perſonal acquaintance, that 40 at leaſt were clearly juſtified.

3. [From the ſame, dated *Kingſton*, *Jamaica*, May 15. 1790.]

I Think it my duty on all convenient occaſions to write to you, as I am perſuaded you muſt feel yourſelf much intereſted in the proſperity of the work in this department.

Our chapel is almoſt finiſhed, and I am favoured with good congregations in it. It will contain from twelve to fifteen hundred people, and is moſt commodiouſly ſituated. We have in Society 30 Whites, 40 decent coloured people, and 80 Blacks; in all, 150: beſides near 50 Catechumens. The work is deepening in our Society. Not leſs than 30 are juſtified, and meet in Band.

A flood of perſonal calumny has been poured upon me; but the merciful God has given me ſtrength to bear up under all, inſomuch that many of my prejudiced enemies are become my friends, and attend the public worſhip in our chapel.

I have the greateſt need of an able preacher to aſſiſt me to open new places, or to take care of *Kingſton* whilſt I do it."

4. [From Mr. *M'Vean*, dated *Tortola*, Jan. 1790.]

I Have been at St. *Kitt's* this Chriſtmas, and there never was ſuch a Chriſtmas ſeen before on that Iſland. I could almoſt wiſh that dear Mr. *Weſley* and yourſelf had been in our chapel at *Baſſe-Terre* for one or two hours on Chriſtmas and New Year's Day. O how would your ſouls

have melted and glowed with love and gratitude to God for making you the happy inſtruments of bringing ſo many dear ſouls to Jeſus; The proſperity of God's work in that Iſland is beyond deſcription. When the Society found that brother *Warrener* was to leave them, they were in a flood of tears, but truly aud meekly reſigned; in ſoft ſighing, breathing out their ſouls to their chief ſhepherd, and confeſſing they had brother *Warrener* longer than they deſerved. Brother *Gamble* arrived there on the 31ſt of December, and was kindly received by all. The chapel was crowded on Thurſday-evening to hear him preach, and all ſeemed well pleaſed and very thankful to God. On Friday the chapel was filled, and a multitude ſtood round the houſe out of doors: it was a time of tears, yea, of refreſhing from the preſence of the Lord. O that God would accept of our thanks for his wonderful goodneſs, and fill our ſouls with love and holy determinations to glorify his ſacred name. Our loving brother *Owens* at *Nevis*, has been very ſickly of late; but, bleſſed be God, he is truly zealous and laborious in the work.

I thank the Lord, he is carrying on a good work in this Iſland. The dear ſouls are very tender and teachable, and I know the Lord deals very graciouſly with them. I aſked an old Negro the other day if he loved God: he anſwered with flowing eyes, "O maſſa, if the Lord loved me as much as me love he, how happy and gladde my heart be!" I believe there are ſome of them that love God with all their heart, that can hardly expreſs their experience."

5. [From the ſame, dated *Tortola*, Feb. 27. 1790.]

GOD in mercy and by his power is carrying on a good work in the Iſles. The poor Negroes are panting and thirſting for living waters, for the blood of the Lamb that was ſlain; for ſalvation by grace through faith. The cry

is,

is, O for a parſon, a preacher, a miſſionary. Think on theſe things, my loving brother, and if it is in your power, I am ſure you will ſend them one. And O I could weep and pray for the dear ſouls, that they may continue awake till a preacher comes. May the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by his bleſſed ſpirit teach and ſave them, for my very heart feels for them. I think our reverend and dear father Mr. *Weſley*, yourſelf, and others, have reaſon to be truly thankful, and to rejoice in the Lord who was pleaſed to chooſe you for his ambaſſadors, to ſend and bring his goſpel, his miniſtry of reconciliation, to the inhabitants of the Iſles that were ſo long in darkneſs. I hope thouſands of the dear ſouls will ſalute you in the ſhining courts of heaven. Theſe are the doings of the Lord, and marvellous in our eyes: glory, glory, glory, be aſcribed unto his name.

6. [From the ſame, dated *Tortola*, March 13.]

THIS evening about ſeven o'clock, a fire broke out at Mr. *Grigg's* (within 150 yards of our houſe and chapel) ſtraight to windward of us. It being a very large two ſtory houſe, and built of pine-timber, the fire burſt through with great violence, and caught another large and elegant houſe of Mr. *Sharer*, which was painted with oil and tar, and built with pitch-pine, which made a dreadful blaze. The wind blew freſh over the town. The people in general were much confuſed, and apprehenſive that moſt of the town would be burnt to aſhes; particularly our chapel, it being ſo near. How to account for it, I know not; but all the while I was compoſed: and though pieces and flakes of fire were falling thick upon the chapel and the houſes around, yet I was confident the chapel would not be burnt: neither was it, bleſſed and praiſed be that God who commands the winds and the ſeas, and they obey him. God in the twinkling of an eye ſhifted the wind clean off, till the two houſes and one or

two

two more were burnt to aſhes. The flame then abated, and the wind ſhifted to its former courſe again. Theſe are the doings of the Lord and marvellous in our eyes: glory, glory, be unto God for all his mercies. All the blind people in the Iſland were amazed and aſtoniſhed at this wonderful deliverance: but all that have their eyes open, adore, praiſe, thank, and love the deliverer. O God, let my ſpirit bear a part, and let my ſoul thank and love thee for ever and ever.

7. [From the ſame, April 28.]

MR. *Brazier* arrived here to-day from St. *Kitts* with favourable accounts of the work of God. The Lord's tender dealings with the Negroes are wonderful, and worthy of the moſt grateful acknowledgments. He is a wonderful teacher indeed, making wiſe the ſimple, and making them his peculiar people, that were no people. We had ſuch a time here on Good-Friday and Eaſter-Day as was hardly ever expected. It ſeemed as if God ſtirred up all the people to attend divine worſhip. Good-Friday in the morning our chapel was as full as it could hold. Between ſixteen and eighteen hundred people attended, and more than as many were on the outſide. The Lord of his goodneſs made it a time of refreſhing: and like the Jews of old, we had in our dwellings for ſeveral days, light, joy, and gladneſs of heart. Indeed, my dear brother, it is allowed by far wiſer men and better judges than I am, that God, the living God, is carrying on great and glorious works in moſt of the iſles where we have preachers.

8. [From Mr. *Gamble*, dated *Baſſe-Terre*, St. *Chriſtopher's*, April 20, 1790.]

MY congregations now are ſo large in general, that the people have not half as much room as is requiſite in theſe climates. I believe God is doing great things among us. I have had a great

great increaſe in the three months I have been here. The number in ſociety is, I think, about a thouſand, but ſet down nine hundred and fifty. You need not give yourſelf any concern in reſpect to our finances in this Iſland: the work now ſupports itſelf. I never found my heart ſo much in the work of God as now, though my trials have been greater, much greater than they were in England. I often think of a word which you ſpoke to me at Berwick-upon-Tweed, "If you do not through grace convert in the Weſt-Indies ten for one you would in England, I ſhall think the cauſe is in your own breaſt." It has done me much good; though then I could not believe it. The work will undoubtedly proſper, if we be devoted to God.

9. [From Mr. *Owens*, dated *Nevis*, Jan. 18, 1790.]

IT is proper I ſhould give you ſome account of the temporals, and ſpirituals, within my circle. Firſt, as to temporals. The houſe I formerly mentioned, has been ſometime finiſhed. As to ſpirituals, my ſucceſs has not probably anſwered your expectations, nor has it kept pace with my own deſires: nevertheleſs there are a few in *Nevis*, whoſe hearts the ſaving grace of Jeſus Chriſt hath reached and changed. I have about two hundred in Society, whoſe minds are in ſome degree enlightened with the beams of truth: aud amongſt theſe upwards of twenty, whoſe artleſs experience diſcovers the ſincerity of their hearts, and ſimplicity of deſign. . . . . .

An old female ſlave called Sylvia, came to me ſome time ago, and begged with the utmoſt earneſtneſs to be admitted into Society. At Claſs-meeting I lately aſked her "Sylvia, how do you feel your heart." Sylvia lifted up to heaven her unfluiced eyes, and replied in her broken way, "Maſſa, me tank me Lord, me never look up to heaven, but me tink, me have a friend dere. Me want to do nothing now but oblige me Lord."

Such

Such ſimplicity as this, often breaks my own hard heart more than all the eloquence of many others. Upon the whole the Lord has done much, which calls for our gratitude and praiſe. I flatter myſelf when you viſit the Societies in the Weſt-Indies, you will not deſpiſe our ſmall things, or refuſe to liſten to the liſping of babes. I never laboured more in all my life. I will not ſay I always work with a ſuitable zeal and becoming ardour; nay, I am convinced I come ſhort in many things, and have need momentarily to pray "Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, O Lord; God be merciful unto me a ſinner."

10. [From Mrs. *Gilbert* of *Antigua*, to Mr. *Webb* of *Briſtol.*]

WE have very dry weather, with heat uncommonly intenſe, but I truſt the Lord will give us timely ſhowers to bring forwards the next year's crop. I doubt not but you will unite your prayers with their's that fear God on this ſide the water, in this behalf. I am informed that the Conference will be at Briſtol this year: you will then, I ſuppoſe, hear much of the work of God in theſe parts. I believe it far exceeds the ideas formed of it by perſons in general, who live in England. They probably will blend the Caribb-work with the general one among the Negroes. The former ſeems quite at a ſtand, and has had great labour and much coſt beſtowed on it almoſt in vain.*

* Our attempt among the few thouſand Caribbs in the Iſland of St. *Vincent's*, has proved unſucceſsful. Their jealouſies of the Engliſh, increaſed by the inſinuations of the French in *Martinico*, have been, as far as we can judge, the grand obſtacles. Abortions muſt be expected in ſo extenſive a work, and it is wonderful that this has been the only one.

11. [From

11. [From Mr. *Harper*, dated *Antigua*, March 6, 1790.]

THERE is at this time a conſiderable revival in *Antigua*, chiefly among the members of our Society who have been joined to us for ſome time. Many of them who ſeemed to reſt upon their lees, are ſtirred up: they ſee their privilege, and preſs after it, I think, as they have never done before.

A few weeks ago, one of our ſiſters (*Elizabeth Strong*) died. The fear of death had been long diſtreſſing to her. Often, when ſitting in ſilence, ſhe would break out, "No, no, no, I can't die. I muſt not die." But three or four days before her death, the Lord took away all her fear, and lifted upon her the light of his countenance. She was in bed, when ſhe received a ſenſe of ſalvation; and, calling for her ſiſter, told her that Chriſt was come to the relief of her ſoul, and that now ſhe could die cheerfully. The little time ſhe lived after this, ſhe ſpent in praiſe and prayer and in adviſing all preſent to give themſelves up to God.

I thank my God, he bleſſes me with inward peace in the midſt of a multiplicity of cares and labours.

12. [From Mr. *Warrener*, dated *Antigua*, Jan. 23, 1790.]

AFTER your letters came to hand in St. *Kitt's*, I prepared for my departure, which could not be with any degree of convenience till Chriſtmas was over. On Chriſtmas-day we had a bleſſed time from four to ſix in the morning. In the great congregation we ſung the praiſes of our Jeſus with enlargement of heart. And in each public ordinance, but in particular at the Lord's ſupper, our glorious God poured out upon us the ſweet influences of his grace. Brother *M'Vean's* ſoul ſeemed like a holy flame of fire.

There

There are a good ſteady people in St. *Kitt's*. O that our God may come with the power of his Spirit, and kindle the flame in every corner of theſe lands.

13. [From the ſame, dated *Antigua*, March 4, 1790.]

THE Lord has a good ſeed in this Iſland, and indeed in the Weſt-Indies in general. A work is begun, which I truſt the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt. I do not wonder that there is ſo much oppoſition, conſidering how the devil's kingdom is ſhaken. And any perſon who would judge of the work in this country, ſhould inform himſelf of the ſtate of matters before the goſpel was preached here: for even the ungodly can ſee and ſay, "There has been a mighty change ſince the Methodiſts and Moravians have preached in this country."

I find, where the work is deep, it is juſt the ſame as in Europe. But it is true, a great number have never had their hearts pierced for ſin: but while they uſe the means of grace, and behave well, there is hope; and I truſt many of them will in time feel ſin to be exceeding ſinful, and Chriſt to be precious. By the help of God I am aiming at this mark——to lead them to the fountain opened for ſin and uncleanneſs.

14. [From the ſame, dated *Antigua*, April 15, 1790.]

WE have good congregations in St. *John's*. On Eaſter-day we had the largeſt company ever remembered here. Praiſed be the Lord, at the meeting of our Bands in particular we have refreſhing ſeaſons.

We have not lately had ſuch an ingathering as I have known in this Iſland; but I hope the work will deepen. I baptized upwards of ſixty on Eaſter-day, and never ſince I knew the Weſt-Indies did I enjoy ſuch a ſolemn melting ſeaſon as

as at that ordinance. The Lord did indeed ſet to his ſeal; and I truſt ſome of the ſeed then ſown, will be found in "that day." Bleſſed be the Lord, I found ſo much of his preſence, that I could have prayed my life away.

15. [From Mr. *Baxter*, dated St. *Vincent's*, Feb. 25, 1790.]

THE Caribbs ſtill remain civil and kind, but will hear nothing of religion. But almoſt all the eſtates in the Iſland are opened to us for the inſtruction of the Negroes.

Brother *Lumb* arrived here a month ago, and we have formed a circuit. One of our black ſiſters died laſt Friday. She had been ſick for two months. She endured her ſickneſs with patience, and witneſſed a good confeſſion. I believe none of our friends that knew her, doubted of her being a child of God. Her name was *Jane Momas*. *Peggy Aſhwell*, a Mulatto woman who has been with us two years, gives daily proof of her converſion to God.

The ſoldiers go forward in the ways of God. Some of them who have left St. *Vincent's* and are gone to *Barbadoes*, ſend us good accounts of the labours of Mr. *Pearce* in that Iſland. Brother *Lumb* labours with all his might, and God gives a bleſſing to his labours. I am going on, endeavouring to do the beſt my mean abilities enable me, hoping for the bleſſing of God."

16. [From Mr. *Pearce*, dated *Barbadoes*, May 15, 1790.]

I Take this opportunity of communicating all the information I have that may promote the glory of God.

Since my laſt, one of the *Bridge-Town* Society went to her eternal reſt. She joined us ſoon after I came here. She had been long before a woman of very good morals. I took much pains with her, as ſhe ſeldom neglected her Claſs, but

I confeſs I was afraid ſhe did not know herſelf, which I ſtill believe was the caſe. But it pleaſed the Lord to afflict her ſeverely about four months before her death, during which time ſeveral of our people with myſelf ſpared no labour to make her ſenſible of her ſtate. The divine Spirit did bleſs in ſome degree the means uſed: for the laſt time I viſited her, was the day before her death. I found her juſt ready to expire, but calling mightily upon God for pardon. All her cry was "The blood of Chriſt, the blood of Chriſt." I adminiſtered to her all the comfort in my power in every reſpect. She was much afraid of death, never ſaw things in the light ſhe now did, and would have given the world, if in her power, for Chriſt. I took my laſt farewell of her, and was afterwards informed by ſome of our people, that before ſhe died, ſhe left a teſtimony behind her of victory over death and aſſurance of eternal life, to the unſpeakable joy of thoſe that were about her, our Society, and myſelf in particular.

I have ſent you a ſmall ſketch of Mr. *Brown's* experience. I flatter myſelf the account will give you very great pleaſure, as it is full of mercy, piety and the mighty power of God.*

I can teſtify that the few collected here, are very ſerious, ſteady and upright: none will continue long among us, if they are not ſo: for our enemies are powerful and diligent, and our people are greatly perſecuted.

Since I began this letter, another of our Society in Town has landed ſafe in glory. Her name was *Cecilia Turton*, a black woman. She had been in our Society about ten months, during which time the whole of her conduct was conſiſtent with the goſpel. She was chiefly drawn with the cords of love. About four months before her death, ſhe profeſſed faith in Chriſt.

* The account is too long to be inſerted here.

17. [From

17. [From Mr. *Nicholas Smith*, Jeweller, to his ſon in *London*, dated *Kingſton, Jamaica*, Oct. 17, 1789. *

MR. *Hammet* has met with encouragement beyond all expectation. No one who is acquainted with the diſſipations of *Jamaica*, would think ſo much could be done in the courſe of eight weeks: and though the great abilities of Mr. *Hammet* muſt be conſidered as the ſecondary cauſe, we muſt look higher, we muſt look to the ſupreme beſtower of all things, who has effected this unexpected change. It is evident he looks in mercy on this Iſland by ſending ſuch a miniſter among us. We have eighty in claſs divided into four parts, three of which meet in my houſe Mondays, Wedneſdays and Fridays. I have no doubt but our Society will increaſe. We are very happy and thankful for being thus bleſt with a miniſter, and with ſuch opportunities of praiſing and adoring God.

18. [From Mrs. *Smith*, dated Dec. 26, 1789.]

THE goſpel ſeems to ſpread rapidly in this town, and we have great reaſon to be thankful to God for ſending among us ſo able and faithful a miniſter. The Society conſiſts of about a hundred members. Indeed it is matter of ſurprize to all that know the diſpoſitions of the people here, that his labours are already crowned with ſuch ſucceſs, which is evidently a proof that the Lord is with him. But there is ſome perſecution: the devil rages with great violence at times; and it is no wonder he ſhould, ſince the foundation of his kingdom ſeems to be tottering. You no doubt rejoice to know we enjoy the means of grace: ſo that we may be ſaid to have a feaſt of the goſpel, where there was lately truly a famine; inſomuch that many of the poor creatures, who four months ago knew no

* Young Mr. Smith has juſt favoured me with the two following extracts.

other uſe for the name of their Creator than to blaſpheme, and pray for imprecations on their fellow-mortals, can now rejoice in the mercy of God, who has ſet their ſouls free from the guilt they laboured under, (for ſeveral are juſtified.) Indeed to hear them praiſing God, and praying for bleſſings on the inſtruments of this work, is deeply affecting.

THUS I have laid before you an account of this bleſſed work of God. I muſt now add that our fund is exhauſted, and I feel myſelf obliged to petition for further aſſiſtance.

Two miſſionaries, Mr. *James Lyons* and Mr. *Thomas Werritt*, both of *Ireland*, two young men of piety and abilities, are going with me in October, if it pleaſe God, to the *Weſt-Indies*, as we have invitations to *Grenada*, *Montſerratt*, and *Honduras-Bay*.

That God Almighty may reward you abundantly for what you have already done to promote his cauſe among the poor outcaſts of men, is the fervent prayer of your obliged and humble ſervant,

THOMAS COKE.

London,
Auguſt 17, 1790.

The Stations of the Miſſionaries.

1. *Barbadoes,*	Benjamin Pearce.
2. *St. Vincent's,*	John Baxter, Matthew Lumb.
3. *Antigua,*	William Warrener, John Harper.
4. *Nevis,*	Thomas Owens.
5. *St. Chriſtopher's,*	Robert Gamble, George Skerrit.
6. *Tortola,*	William Brazier, John M'Vean.
7. *Jamaica,*	William Hammet.

New Miſſionaries, James Lyons, Thomas Werrill.

The Numbers in Society.

Barbadoes,	Whites	10
	Blacks	47
St. Vincent's,	Whites	13
	Blacks	350
Antigua,	Whites and Mulattoes	70
	Blacks	2180
Nevis,	Coloured People	200
St. Chriſtopher's,	Whites and Mulattoes	280
	Blacks	670
Tortola,		1200
Jamaica,	Whites	30
	Mulattoes	40
	Blacks	80
	Total,	*5,170

* By a careful examination of all the numbers returned in the different Letters, I find there are many more in Society than were printed in the Minutes of our laſt Conference. N. B. The Catechumens are not included.